

The Kid Angle

Kid-focused news from First Focus on Children

The keys are in their hands
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The post-Labor Day scramble has arrived. Here's a quick-and-dirty look at what's coming for kids over the next couple weeks:

The key to healthy children

The number of [kids without health insurance rose for the fourth year in a row](#) in 2020, according to figures [released this week by the U.S. Census Bureau](#). The numbers show that nearly 4.3 million children — **or 5.6% of all U.S. children** — did not have health insurance in 2020, a 7% rise over 2019. Children of color were hit hardest, the data suggests, with **9.5% of Hispanic children** lacking health insurance, the highest of any ethnic group.

But wait! There's hope! The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and Medicaid — which together insure roughly 40 million children — scored a victory in budget negotiations last week that offers Congress a rare opportunity to reverse this trend. The Democrats in the House Energy and Commerce Committee announced that **making CHIP permanent and offering children 12-month continuous enrollment in Medicaid are priorities** of their budget legislation.

[More than 500 local and national organizations](#) representing all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico recently joined First Focus Campaign for Children in **urging Congress to make CHIP permanent**.

First Focus Campaign for Children also joined [more than 200 national, state and local organizations](#) who urged House and Senate leaders this week to include language in the reconciliation package that **requires states to offer 12-month continuous eligibility for children on Medicaid and CHIP**. Continuous eligibility would be a game-changer in states like [Texas, where churning off coverage has contributed to nearly 13% of children](#) — a high number of **them Hispanic** — going without health care coverage.

The key to ending child poverty

This week also confirmed the outsized impact of economic assistance on child poverty — and, more important, **the absolute necessity of harnessing that progress**.

The number of children living in poverty, also according to [census figures released Tuesday](#), **actually went down in 2020** — which, you may recall, saw a global pandemic and economic crisis.

When accounting for government assistance — which included two rounds of stimulus payments, and an increase to emergency unemployment benefits and food assistance — the census found that the rate of **child poverty was 9.7% — nearly 3 percentage points lower** than the same figure in 2019. **The stimulus payments alone ensured that nearly 3.3 million fewer children lived below the poverty line, according to the data.**

These figures do not even reflect improvements to child-related tax credits **expected to cut child poverty in half in 2021.**

The moral of the story: We know what works. The proof is right there, in the numbers. Congress has the keys. Will they have the gumption to walk through the door?

Stay tuned.

